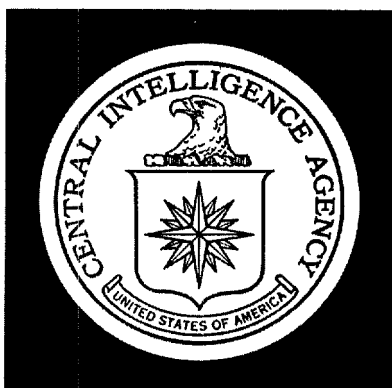


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

*Frictions in the Maghreb*

State Dept. review  
completed

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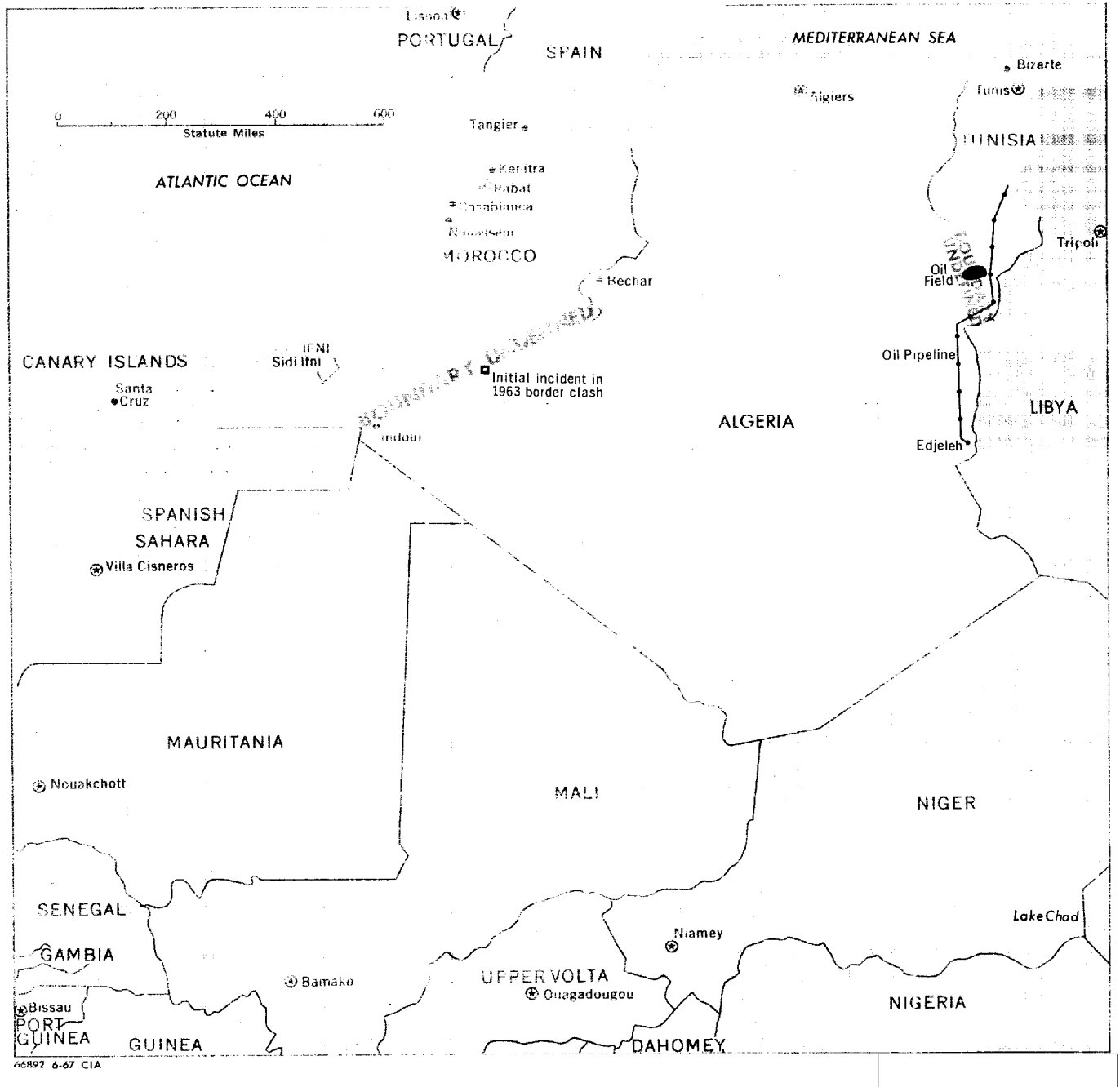
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## FRICTIONS IN THE MAGHREB

The problems and frictions that have developed among the three former French-ruled North African territories of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia have for the moment been beclouded by the cry for Arab unity in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. The issues have not disappeared, however, and the aftermath of the hostilities may in fact heighten them. Although intellectuals in all three countries continue to toy with the idea of Maghreb unity or federation, the problems that have persisted since independence in their relationships with each other, with their Arab and African neighbors, and with the Western powers preclude the development of any meaningful collaboration among them.

Background

A deceptive aura of unity based on common heritage and mutual interests and goals surrounds the Maghreb--Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. All are Arab and Muslim in language and tradition, with a veneer of French culture and philosophy; all are emerging nations, striving to develop their backward--largely agricultural--economies and eliminate illiteracy, poverty, and disease. All are bound closely to France, their former colonial master, all have sentimental ties with other Arab states, and all seek to expand horizons in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. The three are also ambitious for recognition not only as leaders in Africa but in the whole underdeveloped world as well.

Yet the members of the Maghreb do not sing the same tune,

as is evident in their divergent means of expressing "full support" of Arab solidarity in the present Arab-Israeli confrontation. In fact, each assiduously undercuts the others to promote its own interests while at the same time giving lip service to the concept of Maghreb unity.

Early Attempts at  
Unified Action

Long before the first two of the French-ruled North African countries recovered independence--Morocco on 2 March and Tunisia on 20 March 1956--North Africans collaborated to scheme about throwing off French control. The earliest of these councils probably were "bull sessions" of Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian students, principally in Paris but also in Cairo and other centers. After World War II, when Egypt gave sanctuary to Abdelkrim, the legendary

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hero of the Rif rebellion of the 1920s, Cairo became the site for hatching North African intrigues. But Abdelkrim failed to supply the dynamic leadership needed to mold the individual nationalist groups into an organization capable of producing union and action, and the nationalist politicians in Cairo soon fell to bickering among themselves.

In April 1958, although Algeria was not yet free, an attempt was made to lay the foundations for a Maghreb union or federation. Under the auspices of the Moroccan Istiqlal Party, representatives of Istiqlal, the Tunisian Neo-Destour Party, and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) met in Tangier, Morocco. A Mauritanian observer also attended this meeting. Later on, Libyan representatives were invited to participate in Maghrebian meetings. The hard core, however, remains the three former French-held areas.

At Tangier, the Moroccans committed themselves to provide assistance to the FLN more on a par with what the Tunisians were already supplying, while the FLN postponed its plan to establish a provisional government. All agreed to exert every possible pressure to prevent France from marketing Saharan crude oil.

This apparent harmony was disrupted less than five months later when the Algerians launched their provisional government in Cairo without the courtesy of notifying their Moroccan and Tunisian partners in advance. Sub-

sequently, while the Algerians were still fighting the French, Tunisian President Bourguiba angered the Algerians when he permitted France to construct a pipeline across Tunisian territory in order to move Saharan crude oil from Edjeleh to the Mediterranean. The growing number of Algerian refugees in both Morocco and Tunisia also were constant sources of friction, as were the free-wheeling activities of Algerian troops based in both border areas. Both Rabat and, particularly, Tunis began to regard their armed rebel guests as threats to their own regimes.

#### Algerian Independence

When Algeria achieved independence in July 1962 and the Algerian refugees and troops had departed Morocco and Tunisia, new irritants prevented the development of harmonious relationships among the three governments. Morocco had remained a conservative monarchy, Tunisia had become a moderate socialist republic. Both, however, were alarmed at the development of a radically revolutionary-socialist regime in Algeria. King Hassan and President Bourguiba, having supported moderates such as Ferhat Abbas, the first head of the Provisional Algerian Government, came to distrust the erratic and flamboyant Algerian President Ben Bella and his growing group of leftist and Marxist advisers.

The feeling was mutual: Ben Bella blamed the Moroccans for "betraying" him in 1956, thereby permitting the French to capture

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and imprison him and some other Algerian leaders. Moreover, he sharply resented Bourguiba's efforts to counsel and guide him in the intricacies of establishing a new government. There was also some bureaucratic dislocation in Tunis and Rabat occasioned by the withdrawal of experienced Algerian personnel who had been working in the Tunisian and Moroccan civil service in order to become the nucleus of an independent Algerian civil service.

Ben Bella also quickly moved close to Nasir, who was constantly feuding with Bourguiba and had small regard for Hassan in particular and the Moroccans in general. In an effort to gain ground with Algiers, which already was planning a grandiose reception for Nasir, Hassan craftily managed to upstage the Egyptian leader and be the first chief of state given a state reception by independent Algeria. Having been caught off balance, Ben Bella was in an embarrassing position vis-a-vis Nasir and in the long run, Hassan's ploy redounded to his own disadvantage.

Meanwhile, Hassan--who fancied himself a protégé of De Gaulle, while the blunt and undiplomatic Bourguiba was in the French President's disfavor--soon was acutely aware that French relations with Algeria were to be, in De Gaulle's mind, the model for a relationship which would appeal to other underdeveloped areas. Both Tunisia and Morocco found French assistance to them curtailed while that to Algeria seemed to them surprisingly generous. Moreover, when Algeria nationalized French farm-

lands, both Hassan and Bourguiba were under strong domestic pressure to do likewise. After capitulating to this pressure, however, their governments fell into new difficulties with France whereas Algerian-French relations were not seriously affected by Algiers' land seizures. Algeria remains the favorite son in French eyes to this day.

#### Border Problems

Border problems continue to be a main irritant in Maghreb relations. On gaining independence both Morocco and Tunisia claimed territory that France was continuing to administer as part of Algeria. Pressed by nationalist extremists who demanded large areas of southwestern Algeria as well as all of Mauritania and Spanish Sahara, the Moroccan Government soon after Algerian independence broached this subject to Algeria, citing a commitment of Ferhat Abbas to negotiate Moroccan claims after Algerian independence. Ben Bella categorically refused to discuss the question, claiming that Algeria's borders were not subject to negotiation and citing a provision in the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to support this thesis. Although Tunisia's claims were extremely minor compared with those of Morocco, the Algerians also would make no concessions to Tunis.

Numerous border incidents--illegal crossings, banditry, movements of migrant workers, and seasonal migrations of nomadic tribes and their herds--caused many problems for all three governments.

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Tempers in Algiers and Rabat rose in mid-October 1963 when an Algerian patrol clashed with a Moroccan auxiliary unit at a Saharan waterhole they had been sharing. The conflict quickly escalated, and the Moroccan Army--benefiting from air support while the few Algerian MIGs, loaned by Nasir, were stranded at a French-controlled field near Bechar--clearly outfought the Algerian troops.

A cease-fire, supervised by Mali and Ethiopia, was arranged on 1 November and the two forces were separated by a narrow buffer zone that each continues to keep under close surveillance lest the other occupy its strong points. The seven-member OAU commission established to determine the responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict and to recommend a settlement of the border dispute has served mainly to mark time. Having already met in 11 sessions, usually at the request of the Moroccans, it hears arguments counterarguments, and rebuttals with little likelihood of reaching a decision. This Algerian military "defeat" is sometimes cited as justification for the subsequent Algerian arms build-up and sustains Moroccan suspicions that one day Algeria intends to "get even."

Moroccan policy with regard to Spanish Sahara--Rabat has publicly supported independence for the area

has contributed to Morocco's isolation from its neighbors. Consultations among Spain, Mauritania, and Algeria have led Morocco to suspect that it is being surrounded by a Madrid-Nouakchott-Algiers axis.

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Tunisian territorial claims center on a wedge of desert along Tunisia's southwestern border. This issue became acute after a Tunisian-Italian drilling team in 1964 discovered exploitable quantities of oil very close to the disputed area. Some weeks ago, an Algerian company also had an oil strike within a few miles

of the Tunisian well. Rumors of clashes between drilling personnel and of the concentration of troops on both sides of the border are probably exaggerated. A joint Algerian-Tunisian military team has visited the area to direct the placement of border markers in the vicinity of oil drilling operations. Tunisia has not, however, abandoned its demand for the negotiation of the undefined portion of its southwestern border.

#### Maghrebian Dissidents

Another issue contributing to Maghrebian tension in the sanctuary each of the three countries gives to antiregime dissidents from the others.

Since Algerian independence, Moroccan and Tunisian dissidents have gravitated to Algiers, where they have found some encouragement

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and assistance for their effort to undermine the two moderate regimes. Ben Bella refused to extradite three or four Tunisians who fled to Algeria after the discovery late in 1962 of a plot against Bourguiba's life. Algeria also openly encouraged the activities of a handful of Youssefists--supporters of Bourguiba's murdered rival, Salah ben Youssef. Before the overthrow of Ben Bella two years ago, Algeria not only had established training camps, but had armed and equipped some 200 Moroccan military defectors. The Algerians also encouraged the Moroccan left-wing opposition, the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), granting asylum and diplomatic facilities to UNFP leader Mehdi ben Barka--who was under a Moroccan death sentence--and other Moroccan leftist refugees.

For their part, Morocco and Tunisia have irritated Algiers by receiving Algerian opposition leaders

Rabat angered Boumediene last January when the Moroccan Government facilitated, if not sponsored, a state funeral for Algerian oppositionist Mohamed Khider and openly conferred then and later with other Algerian exiles.

#### Soviet Arms Build-up in Algeria

Both Morocco and Tunisia have been increasingly alarmed as their larger neighbor Algeria continues to build up its inventory of sophisticated Soviet weapons. Bourguiba particularly, fearing that Nasir will quickly overrun Libya when the present aged Libyan ruler dies, views himself as wedged in between an antagonistic Algeria and a hostile Egypt. Hassan, as his relations with France deteriorated following the disappearance in Paris of Mehdi ben Barka, has found himself isolated.

Both Bourguiba and Hassan therefore have moved closer to the US and have pressed for military assistance above and beyond existing US programs. They have also attempted to secure additional weapons in Europe.

Although the Algerian threat has impelled the Moroccan and Tunisian governments to collaborate to a degree, certain basic divergencies between these two

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pro-Western moderates will continue to prevent the development of a truly warm relationship. In 1960, Morocco resented the fact that Tunisia recognized Mauritanian independence, and relations between Rabat and Tunis were virtually nonexistent for several years thereafter. Hassan, moreover, is constantly offended by Bourguiba's patronizing and undiplomatic methods. Bourguiba, in turn, has vainly sought staunch Moroccan support for his attempts to develop an alignment of moderate Arab governments as a counterforce to the Arab radicals, for Hassan sees himself instead as a mediator in the quarrels between the two groups.

Boumediene, for his part, denies any aggressive intention toward his neighbors and claims that the modern arms Algeria has acquired are merely to protect its extended frontiers. Nevertheless, he has made it clear that he would retaliate with force were Morocco or Tunisia to attempt to wrest disputed territory from Algeria. Algeria also chose to misinterpret Hassan's appeal on 28 February 1967 to the UN secretary general to take steps toward a reduction of armaments in the Maghreb, countering that the OAU was already attempting to resolve Morocco's territorial dispute with Algeria.

#### Relations With the US

Both Morocco's growing friendship with the US and Tu-

nisia's special relationship as a recipient of a long-term commitment for American economic assistance cause additional frictions in the Maghreb. Many Algerian officials assume that American capitalism seeks the destruction of all socialism, particularly Algeria's revolutionary brand. Fearful of a US-backed Moroccan-Tunisian encirclement, they give credence to rumors of the consummation of alliances and the establishment of military bases in Morocco and Tunisia.

When a Florida shipbuilding firm was negotiating with the Tunisians to establish a ship repair facility near Bizerte, the Algerian Government readily believed that Tunisia was providing a base for the Sixth Fleet despite repeated denials by American and Tunisian officials. The Algerians also assumed, when a contract was signed for the construction of an international airport at the site of the former US base at Nouasseur, Morocco, that the US was reactivating the installation.

The Algerians also resent the fact that the US has not pressed large-scale development projects on them and they make unfavorable comparisons between American aid to Algeria--even though immediately after independence the US fed up to half of the Algerian population for many months--with American assistance to Moroccan and Tunisian industry.

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### Attitudes Toward Arab-Israeli Conflict

In the early days of the present Arab-Israeli confrontation, all three Maghreb governments pledged full support to Nasir, and Tunisia, which formally broke with Cairo in October 1966 after 18 months of de facto rupture, resumed relations. There was a sharp divergence, however, in the degree and amount of support each gave to the Arab cause.

Algeria, as a brother progressive socialist regime, pledged "all-out" assistance to Nasir and, if necessary, a "fight to the death." Algiers sent troops and jet aircraft, and quickly followed Nasir in breaking relations with the US; however, at least some Algerian officials are skeptical of Nasir's charges that the US aided Israel and were prepared to accept US denials. The Algerians reacted to early Egyptian reverses by characterizing the Egyptian soldiers as cowards and were eager for Algerian troops to avenge Arab honor. Subsequently, they have indicated some disillusionment with the lack of Soviet support for the Arabs.

Although King Hassan sent troops to Egypt immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, there are indications that this was not a wholehearted commitment and that he probably preferred they not be engaged in battle. The Moroccan foreign minister has assured the American Embassy that Morocco will

not break relations with the US. Moroccan authorities have taken precautions to prevent public disorder of any kind, but especially against the US, UK, or the Moroccan Jewish minority. Rabat also labeled as "interference" in Moroccan internal affairs an Algerian radiobroadcast urging Moroccans to sabotage the "American bases at Kenitra and Nouasseur."

Bourguiba offered troops to Nasir, but did not send them out of the country. He went through the motions of expressing solidarity with the Arabs and denouncing Israel--indeed, he could have done no less in the face of the strong popular emotion generated by the outbreak of hostilities. He has privately reiterated his friendship for the US, however, and stated that he would not break relations.

### Outlook

The three governments did collaborate to some extent during the Arab-Israeli crisis--Algeria offered transit facilities to Moroccan troops, and Tunis provided transit stops for both Moroccan and Algerian planes and troops--but the prospects for a really amicable relationship seem slight so long as the political orientations of the three diverge so sharply and the military disparity remains so profound. The Israeli military victory and the posthostilities period of recrimination seem certain to add to the existing frictions.

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Some small progress may continue in purely administrative and economic spheres, such as the technical committees now working on standardizing postal and customs procedures. In addition, some lip service probably will still be rendered by all

three to the concept of Maghrebian unity. But larger economic projects such as a proposed Maghrebian airline and the joint development of basic industries and resources seem likely to founder on basic political incompatibility.

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